



Iowa Department of
Administrative Services

Director's Office

Thomas J. Vilsack, Governor
Sally J. Pederson, Lt. Governor

Mollie K. Anderson, Director

Frequently Asked Questions
Severe Weather/Emergency Evacuation

Q: Will state facilities be closed due to severe weather?

A: It is the Governor's philosophy that state facilities will not be closed because of inclement weather. However, under exceptional circumstances, the need to close may arise.

Q: Do I get paid if a state facility is closed due to severe weather?

A: If the proper authorities determine that state facilities should be closed due to severe weather conditions, affected state employees must use their accrued annual leave (vacation), compensatory time previously accrued, or leave without pay. Employees may also be allowed to work at an alternative location during the closing or make up any time missed within the same pay period.

Q: Who determines whether I can work at an alternate location or when I can make up missed time?

A: You should work with your direct supervisor to make these arrangements.

Q: What if I don't have enough vacation or comp time to make up the time I missed because of severe weather?

A: You would have to take leave without pay or work with your supervisor to make up the missed time within the same pay period.

Q: Do I get paid if a state facility is closed because of an emergency situation (i.e., structural damage, environmental contamination, etc.)?

A: If state facilities are closed because of some emergency that is not weather-related, employees will remain in pay status. However, those employees who are evacuated or denied access to a state building must remain available during their regularly scheduled hours. This means each employee must provide his or her employing department with a phone number or contact where he or she can be reached.

Q: Who determines whether to close a state facility?

A: The Governor's Office decides when to close a building located on the Capitol Complex. Outside the Capitol Complex, Department Directors or their designees will determine when a severe weather or emergency condition exists.

Q: Can I work at home in the event of severe weather so I don't need to use my vacation time?

A: Check with your supervisor to determine whether your home is a suitable alternate work location.

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Q: What if I had vacation scheduled at the time there is an emergency closing? Do I get credit in my vacation bank because everyone else will get paid for that time even though they're not working?

A: Your vacation bank will be credited for the number of regular work hours your building was closed due to an emergency.

Q: What if I am sick during an emergency closing? Am I still considered to be in pay status and so I don't have to use my sick leave?

A: During emergency closings, employees stay in pay status because they are considered to be available to work at any time during their normally scheduled hours. If you are sick, you are not available and so your sick leave bank would not be credited.

Q: What if I reach my place of employment before I find out the facility is closed due to severe weather? May I still work my regular hours that day instead of using vacation or making the hours up later?

A: Whenever possible, employees that arrive at work in such situations will be allowed to work their normal workday. However, there may be situations that require the facility be completely evacuated.

Q: How do I find out whether a state facility has closed?

A: WHO and KIOA radio and WHO, WOI and KCCI TV will all be notified of closings in Polk County. For areas outside of Polk County, contact your local media outlets.

Q: I live in a rural area and sometimes can't make it into work even if state facilities aren't closed. What are my options?

A: If you reasonably believe travel would be hazardous to your health or safety, you should call your supervisor and inform him or her of the situation. Your supervisor may allow you to work at home or to make up your time later during the pay period, or you will have to use your vacation or comp time, or take leave without pay.

Q: What if I can't get to work because of severe weather for a couple consecutive days or the closing occurs toward the end of the pay period and I'm not able to make up the time that I missed?

A: You will have to use vacation or comp time, or take leave without pay.

Q: Is it possible to accrue overtime or comp time during the same pay period in which there was an emergency or severe weather closing?

A: Normal overtime and comp time rules apply.

Q: What is considered an "emergency" for purposes of the emergency closing policy? Who makes the determination regarding what constitutes an emergency?

A: An emergency condition exists when the facility is unsafe for normal business operations due to an environmental hazard, a structural failure, or a mechanical condition that would threaten the health and safety of employees. A closing that occurs merely because of severe weather is not considered an emergency closing under this definition.

Q: I don't work in Des Moines. How are severe weather issues handles for me?

A: Your Department Director or his or her designee will determine when a severe weather condition exists.